Color Revolutions in Russia: Possibility and Reality

A.S. Brychkov and G.A. Nikonorov
for Russia's *Journal of the Academy of Military Science*

Translated by Boris Vainer

Foreword by Tom Wilhelm

Color Revolutions in Russia: Possibility and Reality

A.S. Brychkov and G.A. Nikonorov

for Russia's Journal of the Academy of Military Science

Translated by Boris Vainer

Foreword by Tom Wilhelm

FOREWORD

In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian General Staff identified Western democracy and civil society building programs as part of the threat assessment in their practice of military science. In a recent volume of their Journal of the Academy of Military Sciences, an article entitled "Color Revolutions in Russia: Possibility and Reality" looks at the Orange (Ukraine), Rose (Georgia), and Tulip (Kyrgyzstan) revolutions in the context of the current Russian military thought paradigm.

The authors A.S. Brychkov and G.A. Nikonorov begin their article with a critique of the Clausewitzian dictum that "war [is] an extension of politics by violent means" and they question "whether we have reached a point of never going to war again or [whether] wars will still be there but will change their nature rather than substance." Following the General Staff's discipline of historical analysis, the Cold War is poignantly summed up as: "The adversary that defeated us did so without resorting to combat." The authors raise the comparison of WMDs and the experience via the Soviet Union in losing against this sort of threat, and they posit that Russia "will need to revise the emphasis previously placed on armed conflicts." This is in support of current Russian thought that describes a perpetual state of war. The article proceeds to define the threat aspects of "Color Revolutions" in this light.

One of the article's main purposes is to associate the phenomenon of "grand-scale social transformations" with economic development through a military science prism. This rejects any indigenous desires for Western-style democracy or social assistance by the Russian populace and correlates national and individual economic stress to the threat. The article catalogs an extensive list of US and Western governmental and non-governmental organizations and programs that "create an appearance of grand-scale social transformations that were allegedly in consort with hopes of the peoples." The authors state that "there will always be a traitor who will open the city gates." It associates national economic degradation with the goals of these organizations and programs and their activity to lure average Russians into becoming such "traitors". This subjective-into-objective reality aligns with the Russian military science factor of "psychological preparation" of the population for support of the forces.

Interestingly, Brychkov and Nikonorov also outline the strategy and tactics of Color Revolutions in "defeating a geopolitical adversary." They list weakening the opponent, changing the political course from 'Our nation comes first' to pro-Western, and gaining control over the

country's resources by using 'controlled chaos' technologies that ultimately will reduce and degrade the Russian population and place "their national resources under control of transnational corporations."

From the Russian perspective, their argument is not really one of pro- or anti- Democracy. Rather, it is one of forecasting the changing nature of war in the fashion of current General Staff thinking. Brychkov and Nikonorov conclude by stating that "Miscalculations in the internal politics cannot be solved by any kind of special forces, nor by the patriotically minded part of the population who are not interested in a coup. War and chaos caused is not by force but by weakness of the intendent object thereof."

Tom Wilhelm, Foreign Military Studies Office

COLOR REVOLUTIONS IN RUSSIA: POSSIBLITY AND REALITY

The nation is usually either at peace or at war. The meaning of these notions depends on the specific historical situation. The most popular definition of 'peace' is incorrect because it is juxtaposed to 'war', i.e. its absence. The notion of 'war' is also difficult to define for it is complex in nature. This makes it necessary to bring up the classic definition by Clausewitz that makes war an extension of politics by violent means. This notion used to be interpreted in a rather straightforward manner that victory over countries and coalitions can be achieved solely by military means. However, with the advent of WMD and delivery systems the issue of unacceptable losses came to the fore, particularly for the victorious side. Besides, wars are usually followed by some kind of peace-making arrangements and the need to rebuild destroyed infrastructure and national economy that suffered during hostilities. Here comes a question whether we have reached a point of never going to war again or wars will still be there but will change their nature rather than substance, and we will need to revise the emphasis that was previously placed on armed conflicts.

Conflicts have always occurred to resolve political issues where diplomacy failed. Politics is a concentrated reflection of the economy and, therefore, as a social phenomenon war is inextricably intertwined with these factors, which makes it impossible to imagine war in its pure form but rather as armed conflict. That is why in the new world of globalization in all areas of human activity has arisen a logical need for in-depth analysis of political and economic factors that affect confrontations between countries and coalitions when old-fashioned strong-arm methods of resolving political and economic differences can no longer be used for various reasons.

Lack of clear methodological criteria and approaches to such complex and multifaceted phenomena as war and its diagnostics resulted in tragic defeat and disappearance of whole empires. Ancient Rome comes to mind as an example. Same fate awaited the former USSR where politicians and military brass failed to recognize the nature and substance of the ongoing war.

The adversary that defeated us did so without resorting to combat. We, on the other hand, were investing everything in the military component of national security and waited for shots to be fired. The Soviet Union was defeated by a non-military strategy without old-fashioned combat intervention. As the defeated side regardless, whether it was 'cold' or 'hot' war we lost a much of the industrial, agricultural, scientific and military power. However, the geopolitical rival made a blunder. The cumulative potential created in the Soviet era was so resilient that it allowed Russia to begin reemerge as the world power.

The question arises how to influence the political life in Russia in order to shake off the potential rival in the battle for world's resources and markets in the 21st century? Since the times of Alexander the Great it has been common knowledge that even the most unassailable fortress can fall to a donkey loaded with gold: there will always be a traitor who will open the city gates for gold. How does one initiate the "door opening" for the unwanted visitors? One "lock pick" for stubborn fortress nations has proven effective the strategy of indirect action aimed at social life, aka social engineering, for the purpose of effecting regime change in undesirable sovereign states. This strategy was demonstrated in bringing down the Warsaw Pact and partial break-up of Soviet Union by the Western world, the eternal archrival.

Initiating social action, that result in regime change in specific countries became known as color revolution because during this process the opposition used different colors for identification. Regime change in these countries did not signify a radical shift in the form of governance, political or social institutions. We have to treat these social experiments as ordinary coup-de-tat, since only the top leadership changed. However, politologists wanted to create an appearance of grand-scale social transformations that were allegedly in consort with hopes of the peoples of these nations and thus called them 'revolutions'.

The issue of "color revolutions" became much more relevant against the backdrop of global economic crisis, which is still far from being over, and as related to the fight for the limited world's resources, allowing to minimize losses for those countries that will be able to gain control over others' resources. Practically all "color revolutions" follow the same pattern that was tested in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe where they were called "velvet revolutions". "Color revolutions" - in Ukraine (2004, 2014) it was orange as in fruit, in Georgia (2003) it was rose, in Kirgizia (2005) – tulip.

Our historian N.A. Narochinskaya has observed the repeated pattern of all these "color revolutions", "Their scenarios are almost identical… Economic and social foundation for these types of processes are characteristic of nations undergoing a transition period". Overthrow of undesirable political regime can be explained by a "cumulative" effect of superimposing internal and external problems that are acted upon by both outside and internal forces engaged within the sovereign state.

Social overthrows can be disguised by not only political and economic but also religious demands, depending on the specific region. We can observe, for example, a tendency to stage "color revolutions" in the Central Asian CIS states under the flag of radical Islam.

Worsening of relations between Russia and EU led by US has intensified integration processes on the post-Soviet territories. Declaration by President Putin on creating a common economic

zone and by implication political and military cooperation that includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kirgizia, i.e. Eurasian Union, with some other states willing to join in has intensified attempts to change Russia's political course and that of other member states of the Customs Union by staging "color revolutions" on their soil.

The United States is the principal instigator and financier of "reformatting" the global geopolitical map, which is consistent with the role this country has been playing as the world policeman and fundraiser for the transnational capital.

We can see the connection between street protests and grants/fellowships offered by such US funds as Open Society, a George Soros Fund, Harvard University, Albert Einstein Institute, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute, International Center for Non-violent Conflicts, International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and many others. Considerable funding for "color revolutions" was provided through SEED (Support of East European Democracy), which is fiscally supported by the US State Department.

Finally, we should acknowledge that international bodies, such as UN, OSCE, International Tribunal, and international alliances that US has joined are nothing but tools for transnational financial institutions, having gained control over the US, to achieve their objectives and serve their interests. The main historic mission of the United States is believed to be in establishing world order under American management. Currently the Law of Spreading Democracy in effect in the US. According to this law US has to create conditions for promoting human rights and democracy as fundamental and inextricable part of the project for toppling "dictators".

The US Congress and the Federal Government declare and legally establish their right to decide what government and in what country are subject to removal. Mainly for that reason, the current situation in the world is wrought with great uncertainty as to the sources of threats as well as methods and tools of creating social instability.

A special office was formed within the US Department of State in charge of staging and managing "democratic revolutions" in any country chosen by the US Government. By enacting this law all nations on the planet deemed "undemocratic" are considered as unable to exercise their governance, thus needing US assistance. Chiefs of missions at US consulates and embassies in sovereign countries are tasked with executing these directives of the State Department.

Liberal and pro-Western opposition groups as well as NGOs are forming part of what the US State Department on behalf of so-called "international community" proclaims to be the "true" representatives of their people and uses them to overthrow the undesirable government.

In violation of fundamental principles of international law and intergovernmental relations the United States are denying the inalienable right of UN members to determine their own principles of governance and form their governments.

From the time of imposing sanctions against Russia, the US and most of EU member-states openly state that the end goal of sanctions is to undermine the socioeconomic situation in the country to provoke social upheaval and overthrow Putin's regime.

As we can see, US-based financial institutions provide funding to public and commercial NGOs created in countries of interest. According to RF Ministry of Justice, just in 2014, there were 4,108 such NGOs registered on Russian soil and all of them received funding from abroad – 52

of them were deemed foreign agents. Their activities are coordinated by US and EU consulates and embassies in Russia. The principal coordinator of financial activities in the US is USAID. We can only guess about the amounts of money thrown at the non-violent regime change, but keeping in mind that since 1961 USAID has been receiving 1% of US budget. In 2014, NGOs in Russia received over 70 billion rubles. Intermediaries between USAID and recipients of moneys, i.e. "protectors" of Russian civil society, are smaller funds, such as IRI, NDI, and NED. These and similar organizations have representatives in 68 countries. Their activities are aligned with US policies and steered by chiefs of diplomatic mission in the respective country, usually the ambassador.

According to some analysts, in 2015 these foreign-controlled NGOs in Russia received close to $ 10 M. The level of funding depends on the degree of NGO activity and ability to perform assigned tasks. NGOs are created in virtually all segments of social life, i.e. religion, education, human rights, environmental protection, history, culture, family services, etc. In the initial set-up stage, the main objective is to monitor information flow in a specific area and recruitment of cohorts in search for the right moment to spur population for protests.

The their majority, NGOs are human rights activist groups with the main sphere of activity being anti-corruption measures. The greatest danger of corruption is confluence between government authorities and criminal structures with the ability to influence individuals in political decision-making positions; individuals who possess assets acquired by illegal means and then moved them abroad. In the age of electronic payments, there is no longer privacy protections of banking information. All foreign accounts of all individuals are accessible, including offshore accounts. Such is the activity of well-known blogger and human rights activist, A. Navalny, who studied in the US at Yale, can serve as a reminder to some corrupt individuals that they will have to work off for their assets moved abroad to include making needed decisions on all levels of government control. Did anyone think of asking the question how a person with a laptop who uses commonly accessible websites can obtain information on accounts and real estate as well as other compromising information? Or, perhaps, he may know a secret website hidden from everyone else?

A special area of interest for the overseas patrons and their domestic puppets that serve to create a "civil society" in Russia is mass media that is independent of government control. At this time, only Rossiyskaya Gazeta and Krasnaya Zvezda are under complete government control. All the rest of the printed press is incorporated in various degrees.

Neither should we forget about special attention of our "western friends" to our art, culture, and science. Needless to say, those who award grants abroad are hardly interested in natural sciences. Wanted are scientists in such areas as physics, chemistry, and math. These individuals either get offers they cannot refuse to work abroad or their discoveries are bought for practically nothing while stripping them of any authorship rights. In most cases, grant recipients are those who can generate needed results in social sciences. The leading topic in this area is the history of suffering, particularly that of the Soviet people.

On the rise now and it was the case in previous periods of post-Soviet history is the interest on the part of those dubious "researchers" that oppose the policy of national and public security are such events as 1st and 2nd Chechen wars, war against separatism and crime, happenings in Crimea, aid to Syria, etc.

We should also consider the institutionalizing of new research areas taking place in Russia, such as 'elitology' and 'transitology' that owe their emergence solely to grants and NGOs. The former one (elitology) is part of applied political science that focuses on regional and national elite groups, which is actually a variety of Sovietology. We can only surmise why NGOs needed information on the ruling and economically active social group in the main seat of power and outside. The latter area (transitology) is a study of rules, patterns, and conditions related to movements of important scientists, including immigration, and forming their pro-Western views.

On the verge of Duma and presidential elections, we should expect increased activity from NGOs and non-commercial enterprises to apply pressure on public opinion and authorities. We can assume that courses will be offered for voting stations observers who will be crying "wolf" about voting violations and exit poll experts who will have to make statements, if needed, about falsifying election results. International "independent observers" are usually hooked up with this whole "industry"and perform the function of "objective" external assessment of how legitimate the election was carried out. This assessment usually coincides with the data provided by NGOs and that is the goal. The purpose is to bring the people to conclusion that authorities are deceiving them and draw them out onto the streets to protest.

Social networks, the Internet, and cell phones are commonly used to organize such protests. It is possible that rallies will be staged with slogans like "they stole our victory" with Western liberal media at hand. It is also possible that during these rallies and marches provocations may take place initiated by trained individuals who have no real stake in these protests.

If the government does not quash activity of the instigators and participants of such protests early in the game, better yet nip it in the bud, it would be much harder to handle later on.

On the whole, it can be stated that the principal goals of defeating a geopolitical adversary by provoking an internal overthrow are the following:

- Weakening the opponent
- Change the political course from "Our nation comes first" to pro-Western
- Gaining control over the country's resources using 'controlled chaos' technologies

Authors of the 'controlled chaos' conception are specialists from a number of US research institutes, such as Rand Corporation, etc. and main clients are the Roman Club which later on became the Three Party Commission, Bilderberg Club. The general concepts they developed in the 1970's were placed in motion by IMF, World Bank, and WTO.

Analysis of these tools yields two reasons for their use. First, it is reducing the number of population, i.e. those who do not present any interest for the world rulers. That is usually achieved by using non-liberal reforms that lead to a sharp drop in living standards and, as a result, to a demographic disaster, reduced birth rate, and increased death rate. Sexual freedoms, promotion of free love, and homosexuality, also contribute to reaching this goal.

Second is the task of weakening or destroying sovereign nations and placing their national resources under control of transnational corporations.

We should remember that "color revolutions" imploding the governments from the inside are not possible if the government conducts a well-measured internal and external policies, meaning the

external policy is an extenuation of the internal. In other words, “color revolutions” are the result of miscalculations of the government on internal and external policies, when the existing protest capability is increased from outside to the point of explosion that could bury the government under the ruins. Miscalculations in the internal politics cannot be solved by any kind of special forces, nor by the patriotically minded part of the population who are not interested in a coup. War and chaos caused is not by force but by weakness of the intendent object thereof.

It was not by accident that President Putin in one of his addresses noted, “There is a great lure to solve problems at someone else’s expense in the eye of world economic and other calamities…”

This is the type of possibilities we cannot allow such actions against Russia, even hypothetically. It all means that we cannot deceive anyone by appearing weak.\

This translation is provided in accordance with the publication requirements stated in the source: A.S. Brychkov and G.A. Nikonorov, “Color Revolutions in Russia: Possibility and Reality,” *Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk* [Journal of the Academy of Military Sciences] 3 (60) 2017, pp. 4-9.